



**Congresswoman Betty McCollum – Extension of Remarks  
Honoring the Life and Civil Rights Legacy of the Hon. John Lewis  
July 29, 2020**

Madame Speaker, I will always remember my last conversation with a dear friend and colleague, the Honorable John Lewis of Georgia. John had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and he was undergoing treatment. Yet, it didn't affect his kindness, his warm smile, or the gentle touch of his hand. John greeted me and we chatted. It was memorable because it was so natural, normal, and it turned out to also be good-bye.

For nearly twenty years I have served in the Congress with John Lewis, a civil rights champion and legend. His personal journey extended from sharecropper fields in Alabama to civil rights leader, Member of Congress to national treasure. John's voice had the moral authority of a man who had been tested by injustice and tormented by the defenders of injustice. John marched on the frontline of America's struggle for civil rights, voting rights, equal rights and he still had the profound goodness to listen to adversaries, seek goodness in all people, and forgive those who hurt him. John Lewis marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on behalf of Black Americans who were treated as second class citizens by Jim Crow laws, but his lifetime of service and sacrifice, his lifetime of love, was for all mankind. John was a powerful force for good, for righteousness, and for justice.

There are many books written about John's civil rights legacy and many more will be written. His life should be a lesson to all of us and especially to future generations of Americans who will continue to work to overcome inequality as our country strives to be a more perfect union. The courage, commitment and compassion of John's life is well documented and rightly honored. There was another John Lewis that I will remember and cherish.

On numerous occasions over the years John and I had the opportunity to sit on the House floor during votes and just chat. We chatted about everyday matters. John loved gardening. He

talked with great expertise about flowers. It was a special joy in his life that I loved hearing him talk about. And sometimes a conversation on flowers would lead to one on climate change.

Once, we discussed another matter of seeming significance to John – fishing. He told me he liked to go fishing but obligations and official commitments made finding the time difficult. I invited him to visit me in Minnesota during the winter and told him I would share a special experience with him – ice fishing. Well, John smiled and laughed and very graciously informed me that such a thing made no sense to him and he would pass on the invitation.

John Lewis lived by the “Golden Rule” – *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. He worked so hard to live by that rule that he made it look easy for those of us who are not as strong, disciplined, or courageous. I know John had his struggles, but he was a shining example for all who knew him and my life is richer, more full because of his generosity, kindness, and determination.

The passing of Rep. John Lewis is a sad and painful loss for his family, friends, and his congressional staff who loved him very much. It is also a difficult loss for his Georgia constituents, his congressional colleagues, and our entire nation. May God bless the soul of John Lewis and all who loved him. I am eternally grateful to have known John and called him my friend and colleague.